

REMARKS

Reconsideration is requested.

In this response, claims 22, 110 and 115 are amended. Claims 107-108 are cancelled. Claims 113-114 and 116-117 were withdrawn. Claims 22, 31-34, 92-93, 100-106, 109-112, and 115 are in the application for consideration.

As a preliminary matter, Applicant acknowledges with appreciation the courtesy of a telephone interview granted by Examiner Choi on February 2, 2004. During the interview, differences between the claimed invention as amended and the prior art Lee and Gumbert references were discussed. Although no agreement was reached, Examiner Choi agreed that Lee fails to teach or suggest "a plurality of blocks configured to form a recessed portion over an uppermost surface of the panel, the blocks being configured to support the board while leaving the integrated circuit chip components in the recessed portion extending between the block upper surfaces and the uppermost surface of the panel" as recited in the claimed invention. Examiner Choi indicated that further consideration and a search would be required prior to formally issuing a Notice of Allowance.

In the instant Office Action, claims 113-114 and 116-117 have been withdrawn from consideration as being directed to a non-elected invention. Claims 107-108 and 115 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Claim 110 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Lee et al. Claims 22, 31-32, 100-109, and 115

stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Gumbert (U.S. 5,005,814) in view of Patadia et al. (U.S. 6,146,504) and Applicant's Admitted Prior Art (AAPA). Claims 33-34 and 92-93 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Gumbert in view of Patadia and AAPA, and further in view of Mitchell (U.S. 5,932,065). Claim 111 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Lee. Claim 112 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lee in view of Mitchell.

In response to the indefiniteness rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, claims 107-108 have been cancelled, and claim 115 has been amended to overcome the minor informalities. Accordingly, withdrawal of the indefiniteness rejection of claim 115 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, is requested.

Claim 110 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Lee. Lee fails to teach or suggest a panel having an uppermost surface and molded as part of the separator; a plurality of blocks formed as one piece with the panel and extending upward from the uppermost surface of the panel thereby creating a recessed portion on the panel, the plurality of blocks configured to support the board leaving the integrated circuit chip components extending in the recessed portion between the blocks and the uppermost surface of the panel as recited in amended claim 110. (Emphasis Added)

Lee fails to teach or suggest the plurality of blocks being formed as one piece with the panel and extending upward from the uppermost surface of the panel thereby creating a recessed portion on the panel, the plurality of block configured to support

the board leaving the integrated circuit chip components extending in the recessed portion between the blocks and the uppermost surface of the panel. Figure 3 and page 10, lines 12-23, and page 11, lines 9-10 of the present specification provide further details regarding this claim feature.

Even assuming for argument purposes that square blocks (not numbered) shown in Lee's Figure 2 to be the plurality of blocks, such square blocks are not formed as one piece with the fixture 10, and they do not extend upward from the uppermost surface of the panel to support the board (e.g., Lee's PCB 20) leaving the integrated circuit chip components extending in the recessed portion between the blocks and the fixture 10. Lee's slots 14 and 18 formed in the fixture 10 are merely cutting grooves to accommodate cutting blade 35. Further, Lee is not capable of accommodating the integrated circuit chip components in slots 14 and 18 (Lee's cutting grooves) as such an exercise would cause the cutting blade 35 to cut through the chip components – which is against Lee's teachings.

In view of the above, Lee fails to identically describe every single element of claim 110. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that Lee fails to anticipate claim 110. Claim 110 is therefore allowable.

As claims 111-112 depend from claim 110, they too are allowable.

Claims 22, 31-32, 100-109, and 115 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Gumbert in view of Patadia et al. and AAPA.

Amended claim 22 recites, in part, “a plurality of blocks over the panel, the plurality of blocks having curved upper surfaces and configured to form a

recessed portion over an uppermost surface of the panel, the blocks being configured to support the board while leaving the integrated circuit chip components in the recessed portion extending between the block upper surfaces and the uppermost surface of the panel....” (Emphasis Added)

Gumbert discloses a product carrier for circuit boards, the product carrier being used for a mounting operation of components – not cutting operation to separate integrated circuits. See the Abstract. Therefore, Gumbert fails to teach an integrated circuit package separator as recited in claim 22.

Further, Gumbert fails to teach or suggest a plurality of blocks configured to form a recessed portion over an uppermost surface of the panel, the blocks being configured to support the board while leaving the integrated circuit chip components in the recessed portion extending between the block upper surfaces and the uppermost surface of the panel.

Patadia and AAPA fail to cure Gumbert’s deficiencies. Even if the teachings of Patadia and AAPA are combined with Gumbert, all the limitations of claim 22 are not met.

In view of the above, claim 22 is allowable over the combination of Gumbert, Patadia and AAPA.

As claims 31-32, and 100-109 depend from claim 22, they too are allowable over the combination of Gumbert, Patadia and AAPA.

Claim 115 is allowable at least for similar reasons set forth above with regard to claim 22 in addition to its own independently recited features.

Claims 33-34 and 92-93 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Gumbert in view of Patadia and AAPA and further in view of Mitchell. Claims 33-34 and 92-93 depend from claim 22 and further limit the scope of claim 22 in a patentable sense. Mitchell discloses a universal fixture for supporting and holding populated sides of printed circuit board assemblies during processing. Mitchell fails to cure the deficiencies of Gumbert, Patadia and AAPA. Therefore, claims 33-34 and 92-93 are allowable over the combination of Gumbert, Patadia, AAPA and Mitchell.

Claim 111 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Lee. Claim 111 depends from independent claim 110 and therefore further limits the scope of claim 110 in a patentable sense. Claim 111 is therefore allowable.

Claim 112 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lee in view of Mitchell. Claim 112 depends from claim 110 and therefore further limits the scope of claim 110 in a patentable sense. Mitchell fails to cure Lee's deficiencies. Claim 112 is therefore allowable.

This application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance, and action to that end is requested. If the Examiner's next anticipated action is to be anything other than a Notice of Allowance, the undersigned respectfully requests a telephone interview prior to issuance of any such subsequent action.

Respectfully submitted,

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